

## 1503 Procedure

The 1503 Procedure, named after ECOSOC Resolution 1503 (1970), allowed the Human Rights Commission to address complaints regarding consistent and severe human rights violations worldwide. This process was deliberately thorough and time-consuming to ensure accusations against states were not made lightly. It focused on 'situations' rather than individual cases, with an average of 500,000 complaints received annually. Between 1997 and 2005, approximately 86 states underwent scrutiny, distributed across different regions. The Human Rights Council revamped this procedure on June 18, 2007, as part of its mandate to review and enhance the functions of the former Commission on Human Rights.

The Procedure maintains confidentiality to foster cooperation with the concerned State. It involves two working groups: the Working Group on Communications and the Working Group on Situations. The former screens out manifestly ill-founded and anonymous communications, while the latter assesses admissibility and merits. Admissible communications and recommendations are forwarded to the Working Group on Situations.

The Working Group on Communications (WGC) consists of five experts, representing the regional groups, serving for three years. The WGC evaluates communications and sends recommendations to the Working Group on Situations.

The Working Group on Situations (WGS) is composed of five members appointed by regional groups, serving for one year. It examines communications from the WGC, along with States' responses and ongoing situations under the complaint procedure. The WGS provides the Council with a report on consistent patterns of violations and makes recommendations for action. The Council then decides on each situation.

The Council or the WGC considers all communications regarding human rights violations unless:

1. Clearly politically motivated; or
2. Inconsistent with UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or other relevant human rights instruments; or
3. Lacks a factual description of alleged violations, including the specific rights involved; or
4. Contains abusive language (may be considered after removal of such language); or
5. Not submitted by a person or group claiming to be a victim of human rights violations, or by individuals/groups, including NGOs, with reliable knowledge of the violations; or
6. Solely relies on mass media reports; or
7. Pertains to a case under investigation by a UN or similar regional complaints procedure; or
8. Domestic remedies haven't been exhausted, unless they appear ineffective or unreasonably prolonged.

